



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

Testimony of  
David Y. Ige  
Governor, State of Hawai'i

Before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**  
March 8, 2019  
2:45 p.m., Room 016

In consideration of  
**GM 605, Pankaj Bhanot**  
as the  
Director of the Department of Human Services

Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and committee members:

I respectfully request your support in confirming the reappointment of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Pankaj has served as the director of the DHS since September 2016. He previously served as deputy for two prior directors. He is an attorney by training who has dedicated his professional life to human rights and human services. Bhanot earned a B.A. in political science from Hindu College, University of Delhi, a J.D. from the Law Centre-I, University of Delhi, and an LL.M. in international human rights law from Cornell Law School.

DHS is vital to this administration's goal of changing the trajectory of Hawai'i. During my first term, Pankaj has led the charge in enabling DHS to improve its effectiveness in reducing poverty. I would like to see him sustain this proactive approach by continuing to encourage self-sufficiency and supporting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

My administration is committed to reshaping the culture of government by embracing and accelerating change. I am confident that Pankaj Bhanot will continue to support our employees at DHS in this effort. Moving forward together, we can build a better home for our keiki, kupuna, and all the residents of Hawaii.

Mahalo for your consideration.



**LATE**

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
STATE CAPITOL  
HONOLULU, HI 96813

Testimony of **Joshua B. Green Lieutenant Governor**,  
State of Hawai'i  
Before  
the **SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**  
March 8, 2019 2:45 p.m.,  
Room 016

In consideration of **GM 605, Pankaj Bhanot**  
as the **Director of the Department of Human Services**

Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and committee members:

I am respectfully and enthusiastically requesting your **STRONG SUPPORT** in confirming the reappointment of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Pankaj has diligently served as the director of DHS, leading the department with vision and aloha, since September of 2016. Prior to his tenure as Director, he spent the better part of two decades working with the department, striving to provide the most vulnerable among us with the resources and support that was needed to help all of Hawaii's residents live successful, independent, fulfilling lives; a mission he is just as committed to today.

Growing up in India, Pankaj always had a passion for helping people which lead him to pursue a path in law, earning a B.A. in political science and a J.D. from the University of Delhi before going on to receive his LL.M in international human rights law from Cornell Law School.

It has been a privilege to have known and worked with Pankaj for many years during his time at DHS. In my capacity as a state legislator, having served as the Human Services Chair in both chambers, our paths have crossed often, and I have come to know him as someone who is entirely engaged, fully passionate, extremely competent, and completely dedicated when it comes to the enormous and honorable task of human service.

Pankaj Bhanot is the compassionate leader we need to support all of the hardworking, dedicated employees of DHS as they work to fulfill our common mission of moving Hawaii forward together.

Mahalo for your consideration.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



RYKER WADA  
DIRECTOR

JASON MINAMI  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
235 S. BERETANIA STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

March 1, 2019

TESTIMONY TO THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES  
For Hearing on Friday, March 8, 2019  
2:45 p.m., Conference Room 016

By

RYKER WADA  
DIRECTOR

**Governor's Message 605  
(WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY)**

Dear Chair Ruderman, Vice-Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee on Human Services

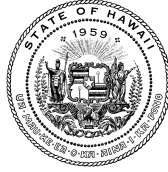
RE: Consideration and confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as Director for the Department of Human Services

I submit this testimony in **Strong Support** of the confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as Director of the Department of Human Services. I have had the opportunity to work with Mr. Bhanot over the past two years as Director. I have found him to be a dedicated, knowledgeable, measured and a well-prepared person who is well suited for the position of Director of the Department of Human Services.

I support the confirmation of Mr. Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in **SUPPORT** of Governor's Message 605 and Pankaj Bhanot.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



CURT T. OTAGURO  
COMPTROLLER  
  
AUDREY HIDANO  
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES**

P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

TESTIMONY  
OF  
AUDREY HIDANO, DEPUTY COMPTROLLER  
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES  
TO THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES  
ON  
FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2019, 2:45 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 016, STATE CAPITOL

G.M. 605

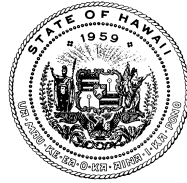
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, **PANKAJ BHANOT**, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE AT NOON ON 12-05-2022.

Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on G.M. 605. I support the nomination of **MR. PANKAJ BHANOT** to the position of Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

I've known Mr. Pankaj since 2010 in his capacity as DHS Deputy Director and as Director of DHS since 2016. Mr. Pankaj has an extensive public service background as shown in his resume's list of previous employments throughout the Department. He also has a variety of educational backgrounds, multiple language skills and is a licensed Massage Therapist. Mr. Pankaj has many awards and recognitions that when listed, is long than a page.

Mr. Pankaj's legal background and departmental experiences would be an asset to DHS and the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM605**  
**Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, PANKAJ BHANOT, for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022.**

SENATOR RUSSELL E. RUDERMAN, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES.

Hearing Date: March 8, 2019

Room Number: 016

1 **Fiscal Implications:** N/A.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the nomination of Mr.  
3 Bhanot for Director of the Hawaii Department of Human Services.

4 Mr. Bhanot's professional accomplishments are numerous, and include the recognition of his  
5 peers, colleagues, and staff as statewide Manager of the Year as well as accolades from the  
6 private sector.

7 Under the Ige Administration, the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health  
8 are collaborating more closely than ever with the 'Ohana Nui/2-Generation framework that  
9 address the social determinants of health and well-being at a family level. This model is based  
10 on a strong foundation of research and emerging science related to, for example, the negative  
11 consequences of Adverse Childhood Experiences. Mr. Bhanot's dynamic leadership, talent for  
12 administration, and personal touch will help propel 'Ohana Nui towards success.

13 Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of GM605.

14 **Offered Amendments:** N/A.

15

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



SARAH ALLEN  
ADMINISTRATOR  
BONNIE KAHAKU  
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

**STATE OF HAWAII  
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE**

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**TESTIMONY  
OF  
SARAH ALLEN, ADMINISTRATOR  
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE**

**TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE  
ON  
HUMAN SERVICES**

Friday, March 8, 2019, 2:45 PM

**GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE No. 605  
Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the  
Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee,  
PANKAJ BHANOT, for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022.**

Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on GM 602

The State Procurement Office (SPO) strongly supports Pankaj Bhanot's confirmation as director of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Mr. Bhanot has consistently adhered to the procurement code, partners with the SPO, and is currently working on a procurement manual for his staff. His leadership is strong, thoughtful and communicative. Mr. Bhanot creates the culture of partnership, learning and continuous improvement, and maintains a strong ethical expectation across his department.

Thank you.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



SCOTT T. MURAKAMI  
DIRECTOR

LEONARD HOSHIJO  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

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March 5, 2019

To: The Honorable Russell E. Ruderman, Chair,  
The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

Date: Friday, March 8, 2019  
Time: 2:45 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 016, State Capitol

From: Scott T. Murakami, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: G.M. No. 605 Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director of  
the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, PANKAJ BHANOT**

Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Scott T. Murakami, and I am the Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. I am testifying in support of Governor's Message 605, Gubernatorial Nominee, Pankaj Bhanot, as the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Mr. Bhanot has demonstrated that he has the leadership and experience to successfully lead the DHS. As the Director of the DHS, Mr. Bhanot works to ensure that timely, efficient and effective programs, services, and benefits are provided to those our State's most vulnerable. I had the pleasure of working with Mr. Bhanot on the University of Hawaii's Hawaii Nutrition Employment and Training (HINET) program, which assists SNAP eligible students with food, transportation, basic living needs, and educational expenses. Mr. Bhanot envisioned the HINET program as an avenue to reduce the incidences and impact of intergenerational poverty through education. Mr. Bhanot's leadership and vision were invaluable and inspiring, and have helped many students succeed.

I urge you to confirm Mr. Bhanot to serve as the Director of the DHS so that he may continue to provide leadership and service to the public.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support of Mr. Bhanot.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



HAKIM OUANSAFI  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY  
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET  
POST OFFICE BOX 17907  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

Statement of  
**Hakim Ouansafi**  
Hawaii Public Housing Authority  
Before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

**Friday, March 8, 2019**  
**2:45 PM**  
**Room 016, Hawaii State Capitol**

In consideration of  
**GM 605**  
**SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFORMATION TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, PANKAJ BHANOT,**  
**FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 12-05-2022**

Honorable Chair Ruderman and Members of the Committee on Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of GM 605, reappointing Mr. Pankaj Bhanot to the position of Director of the Department of Human Services.

Since his confirmation as Director for the Department of Human Services (DHS), Director Bhanot has proven to be knowledgeable, experienced, and dedicated. With over nineteen years spent working within DHS, Director Bhanot has both an extensive understanding of all programs being implemented by the department and its attached agencies and how to work within the legislative system to effectuate comprehensive legislation and departmental appropriations.

Since becoming the Executive Director of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA), I have worked closely with Director Bhanot on a broad spectrum of issues. Director Bhanot is a man of great integrity, knowledge, high moral character, care and vision. His open and honest nature and approach to confronting, and ultimately solving issues, has proven to be most effective when working with diverse personalities and achieving goals.

The HPHA urges the Committee to pass GM 605 and appoint Mr. Pankaj Bhanot to the position of Director of Human Services.



DAVID Y. IGE  
Governor

JOSH GREEN  
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
Acting Chairperson  
Board of Agriculture

State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

MARCH 8, 2019  
2:45 P.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 016

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 605  
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, PANKAJ  
BHANOT, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE AT NOON ON 12-05-2022

Chairperson Ruderman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on GM 605, submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, Pankaj Bhanot, for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022. The Department strongly supports this measure.

Mr. Bhanot has served as the Director of the Department of Human Services since 2016. He has worked as a department division administrator and has led various projects across the State supporting the important efforts at DHS. His extensive experience, strong leadership, and compassion are vital for the State as the Director of the DHS.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



SCOTT T. MURAKAMI  
DIRECTOR

LEONARD HOSHIJO  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
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DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OCS

March 8, 2019

Testimony of **Denise Iseri-Matsubara**  
**Executive Director, State Office of Community Services**  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Before the  
**Senate Committee on Human Services**  
Friday, March 8, 2019 at 2:45 p.m., Conference Room 016

**GM 605**

Submitted for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, Pankaj Bhanot

Aloha Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on GM 605. The Office of Community Services (OCS) strongly supports the nomination of Pankaj Bhanot for the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS). I've had the pleasure and good fortune to work with Pankaj over the past several years. Mr. Bhanot has been with the Department of Human Services for two decades. He has the leadership skills and experience to successfully lead one of the largest departments in the state in terms of budget (\$3.6 billion) and people (over 2,300 employees). He is dedicated, compassionate, and works tirelessly to make a positive difference in the lives of one out of every four Hawaii residents.

Both of our agencies administer programs that serve the poor, low-income, disadvantaged community. It is through Pankaj's support that OCS is able to utilize a portion of the state's LIHEAP programmatic funds in conjunction with our Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) to better assist low-income residents with reducing their household energy costs. Because of his leadership and collaborative spirit, OCS is now able to recover a portion of its costs to administer a legal advocacy program that helps stabilize families with at-risk children.

OCS respectfully asks for your support in confirming the appointment of Pankaj Bhanot for a second term. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Statement of  
**Mike McCartney**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

Friday, March 8, 2019  
2:45 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

in consideration of  
**GM 605**  
**Submitting for consideration and confirmation as Director, Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee,**  
**PANKAJ BHANOT, for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022.**

Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee.

I **support** the appointment of **Pankaj Bhanot** to serve as the Director of the Department of Human Services.

Mr. Bhanot has been with the Department of Human Services (DHS) for over 20 years and has served as the Director since 2016 where he has managed one of the largest departments in the State with a mission to encourage self-sufficiency and support for the well-being of individuals, families and communities in Hawaii. During his tenure he has had to work with internal and external partners to implement programs benefiting a wide range of clients, integrate the enterprise system to a single platform, draft and implement the department's first strategic plan, and manage the budget, legislation and provide support to staff. He is a capable leader with proven skills and extensive work experience. His service will benefit the DHS and the people of the State of Hawaii.

For these reasons, I urge his confirmation for Director of the Department of Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN M.D.  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



LINDA CHU TAKAYAMA  
DIRECTOR

DAMIEN A. ELEFANTE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION**  
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 221  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
<http://tax.hawaii.gov/>  
Phone: (808) 587-1540 / Fax: (808) 587-1560  
Email: Tax.Directors.Office@hawaii.gov

To: The Honorable Russell E. Ruderman, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

Date: Friday, March 8, 2019  
Time: 2:45 P.M.  
Place: Conference Room 016, State Capitol

From: Linda Chu Takayama, Director  
Department of Taxation

Re: GM 605 PANKAJ BHANOT

Honorable Chair Ruderman and Members of the Committee, my name is Linda Chu Takayama, Director of Taxation, and I offer this testimony in strong support of Pankaj Bhanot's confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services.

It has been my privilege to work with Pankaj since I joined this Administration nearly 4 years ago. Although we operate in different departments, we have many common management challenges and a common commitment to address them with expediency and fairness. He has even conducted workshops with my staff on some of the innovative solutions he has developed to make government work better.

Pankaj's talent and dedication are critical to the success of a department as large and varied as Human Services.

I look forward to continuing to work with Pankaj and urge your favorable consideration of his nomination.

Thank you.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



CURT T. OTAGURO  
COMPTROLLER  
  
AUDREY HIDANO  
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES**

P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
OF  
CURT T. OTAGURO, COMPTROLLER  
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES  
TO THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES  
ON  
MARCH 8, 2019, 2:45 P.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 016, STATE CAPITOL

G.M. 605  
SUBMITTING FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE  
DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GUBERNATORIAL  
NOMINEE, PANKAJ BHANOT, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE AT NOON ON 12-05-2022

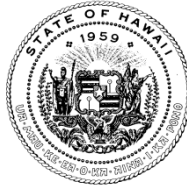
Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on G.M. 605. I support the nomination of Mr. Pankaj Bhanot to the position of Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Mr. Bhanot has served as the Director of DHS since September 1, 2016. He has served as Deputy Director at DHS from December 2010 – January 2012 and from January 2015 – August 2016. Previously, Mr. Bhanot served as the Division Administrator for the Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division at DHS. In addition, he has received numerous awards and honors that attest to his distinguished state service and commitment to human services.

Mr. Bhanot's extensive background in public service makes him an ideal selection to be Director at DHS. I appreciate his wise counsel and advice as a new State employee.

Mr. Bhanot has been a wonderful and willing resource within the Governor's cabinet. He is definitely an asset to the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



**TESTIMONY BY:**

JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors  
LYNN A.S. ARAKI-REGAN  
DEREK J. CHOW  
ROSS M. HIGASHI  
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN

**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

**LATE**

March 8, 2019  
2:45 p.m.  
State Capitol, Room 016

**G.M. 605**

**Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, PANKAJ BHANOT, for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022.**

**Senate Committee on Human Services**

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) **strongly supports** Pankaj Bhanot's nomination as the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Mr. Bhanot was born and raised in India and came to the United States in 1990 and has called Hawaii home since 1992. He received his bachelor's in political science (1986) and law degree (1990) from the University of Delhi, India; received master's in law from the Cornell University School of Law (1991); and conducted four years (1993-1997) of post-graduate research at the University of Nottingham School of Law in Nottingham, England.

Prior to joining DHS, Mr. Bhanot served as the Family Development Director of the Kauai Economic Opportunity, Inc. (KEO), a non-profit agency on the island of Kauai, from 1998-1999. Mr. Bhanot served as the Division Administrator of the Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division of DHS from 2007 to 2010 and was the department's Deputy Director from 2010 to 2012 where he led a business transformation initiative that garnered national recognition.

Mr. Bhanot is an excellent choice to lead DHS. He has proven himself as an effective and dynamic leader in each of his capacities at DHS. He has provided a steady hand as the department's Director. If you're looking at qualifications, his are impeccable. If you're looking at experience and how he has served in every job he has held, he is without blemish.

We strongly urge his confirmation. DHS is in very good hands, and we look forward to DHS continuing to make the significant progress which it has made over the recent years.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
919 Ala Moana Boulevard, 4th Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

**NOLAN P. ESPINDA**  
DIRECTOR

**Maria C. Cook**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**Jodie F. Maesaka-Hirata**  
Deputy Director  
Corrections

**Renee R. Sonobe Hong**  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 605  
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS DIRECTOR  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES,  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE PANKAJ BHANOT.

by  
Nolan P. Espinda, Director  
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Human Services  
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

Friday, March 8, 2019; 2:45 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports the nomination of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director for the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Director Bhanot brings 20 years of committed service to State government, previously serving in leadership positions in DHS, including Division Administrator of the Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD), Deputy Director, and most recently, as the DHS Director.

Mr. Bhanot spearheaded the Business Process Reengineering Project (BPR) during his tenure as BESSD Administrator, a project that continues today and which has already served to markedly increase the efficiency and effectiveness in determining eligibility and deploying needed benefits to service clients. The award-winning BPR has resulted in faster processing of, for example, federally-funded SNAP claims, cost-savings to the State, and a significant multiplier effect on the State's economy.

Mr. Bhanot's leadership in programs and initiatives such as BPR provides ample justification for his confirmation as DHS Director.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII

JOSH GREEN  
LT. GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII



JOBIE M. K. MASAGATANI  
CHAIRMAN  
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.  
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRMAN

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

P. O. BOX 1879  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

**LATE**

TESTIMONY OF JOBIE M. K. MASAGATANI, CHAIRMAN  
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES  
HEARING ON MARCH 08, 2019 AT 2:45 PM IN CR 016

IN SUPPORT OF

**GM605**

for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human  
Services, (DHS)  
Gubernatorial Nominee, **PANKAJ BHANOT**,  
for a term to expire 12-05-2022

March 08, 2019

Aloha Chair Riuderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and members of the Committee:

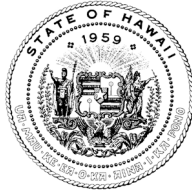
It is an honor to provide this testimony in support of Governor Ige's nomination of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Mr. Bhanot's background, professional credentials and his tenure at the DHS make him well-qualified for this appointment. His awards, presentations, and publications note his long experience in human services. The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands looks forward to working with him for the next four years.

We respectfully ask your committee to advise and consent to this nomination, and we thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



DOUGLAS MURDOCK  
CHIEF INFORMATION  
OFFICER

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

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Testimony of  
DOUGLAS MURDOCK  
Chief Information Officer  
Enterprise Technology Services

Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES  
Friday, March 8, 2019

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE No. 605  
Gubernatorial Nominee Pankaj Bhanot

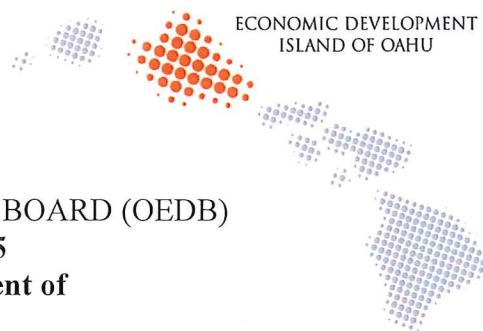
Dear Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and members of the committee:

I am testifying in support of Mr. Pankaj Bhanot, nominee for Department of Human Services (DHS) Director. Mr. Bhanot has served as DHS Director since September 2016 and has spent most of the last twenty years working for the department. He has held a variety of positions within DHS including deputy director, division administrator, employment and child care program administrator, and food stamp employment and training program specialist.

I've had the pleasure of working for Mr. Bhanot as chief technology officer at DHS. Along with being dedicated and committed to the work his department performs, he is wholeheartedly compassionate about the children, individuals, and families of our state, as shown by his Ohana Nui strategy. Combined with his passion to serve the people of Hawaii and his years of experience at DHS, he will continue to be a tremendous leader for the department and the state. When I need important advice, Pankaj is first on my list of trusted advisors. For those reasons, I strongly urge the committee to confirm Mr. Bhanot's nomination.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Mr. Pankaj Bhanot.

Submitted Via Online  
March 5, 2019



Testimony of the  
OAHU ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD (OEDB)  
**In Support of GM 605**  
**Relating to the Appointment of**  
**PANKAJ BHANOT**  
**Director, Department of Human Services**

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES  
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

Friday, March 8, 2019  
2:45 P.M.  
Conference Room 016  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this letter of unwavering support to confirm the nomination of Pankaj Bhanot as Director of Department of Human Services for the State of Hawaii.

Although it has only been 5 years, time is no measurement of respect and admiration I have for Pankaj. I consider it a tremendous advantage to the people we serve in public housing including our staff and management to have a compassionate and dedicated Director who is not only knowledgeable to the workings of the department but also has the sensitivity to practice trauma informed care with those he engages.

Too common in today's Civic engagements are people tactically pitting folks against others or using threats, protests, campaigns, and investigations towards some objective outcome. While the objective might be righteous the process inspires fear, stress, and trauma on the community. I personally observe that as status quo or even low bar behaviors in a community with a deep past of compassion, listening, and conversation.

If we are to recover the health and well-being of our communities I would offer that it would be wise to encourage leaders to learn and practice what it means to be a public servant like Pankaj.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Pono Shim  
President and CEO



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**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/3/2019 11:42:58 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By    | Organization                                   | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|-----------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Louis Erteschik | Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center | Support            | No                 |

## Comments:

HDRC is very pleased to submit testimony in support of the nomination of Pankaj Bhanot to be the Director of the Department of Human Services. I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Pankaj for many years, going back to times when he served previously as Deputy Director and when he was working at the program level within the Department. I have worked with many Directors at DHS as our agency frequently interacts with them and I can without hesitation state that I believe Pankaj is the best Director I have seen at the Department. His years "in the trenches" have given him a deep institutional understanding of the workings of the Department. He is a creative, "big picture" thinker who has broad visions for where he hopes to take the Department in the current Administration. Beyond that, on a personal level, he is simply a delightful individual to work with. His warmth and kindness radiate through to his staff and to all the colleagues who deal with him. There is good reason that he is held in high esteem by all who come in contact with him.

It may at first glance sound facetious for me to say that despite the fact that at times HDRC finds itself in litigation with DHS, that we are nonetheless in strong support of Pankaj. Actually, the truth is that that statement speaks volumes about who Pankaj Bhanot is. Yes, there are times when the nature of advocacy sometimes puts our agency on the other side of state government. However, I can clearly state that no-one is more committed to solving the problems that affect the population we serve than he is. He has always maintained an open door policy and has been a very willing partner in collaboration with us. I consider him a friend; am proud to support his nomination, and urge the Committee to move to confirm him for another term.





**TO: Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services**

**FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)**

**DATE/LOCATION: Friday, March 8, 2019; 2:45 p.m., Conference Room 016**

**RE: TESTIMONY IN STRON SUPPORT OF GM 605– RELATING TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

**We ask you to support GM 605 which submits for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, PANKAJ BHANOT, for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022.**

I feel privileged to submit this letter of support and enthusiastic recommendation for the consideration and confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot to a second term as the Director of The Department of Human Services. Mr. Bhanot has proven to be a valuable and effective leader of the Department with an excellent repertoire of educational and administrative skills. Serving for over 20 years in the Department, he is knowledgeable about the culture that exists here in Hawaii and can speak with authority about the various issues surrounding human services.

I offer my full support of Mr. Bhanot as he will look out for the best interests of our social service system and ultimately the well-being our children and families.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 18 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, and poverty prevention and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of GM 605**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or [rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org](mailto:rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.



**March 8, 2019 at 2:45 PM**  
**Conference Room 016**

**Senate Committee on Human Services**

To: Chair Russell E. Ruderman  
Vice Chair Karl Rhoads

From: Hilton R. Raethel  
President and CEO  
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: **Testimony in Support**  
**GM 605, Submitting for consideration and confirmation Pankaj Bhanot to serve as the Director of the Department of Human Services**

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the health care continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 20,000 people statewide.

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to **support** the nomination of Mr. Pankaj Bhanot to continue serving as the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS). We have thoroughly enjoyed working with Mr. Bhanot in his role as Director and have full confidence in his ability to continue to successfully lead the Department.

In his first term as Director, Mr. Bhanot initiated the planning, design, and implementation of the state's comprehensive 'Ohana Nui program that has shown his commitment to addressing the social, cultural, and multigenerational issues that cause individuals to need help. His leadership and vision on this project represents a culmination of many years in public service at DHS, and shows his deep understanding of the reasons that people rely on important safety net programs like the ones offered by his agency and also demonstrates his commitment to make changes to help the most vulnerable in our communities.

We believe that, if confirmed, he will continue to serve the state with integrity and vision. We support without reservation Mr. Bhanot's nomination and look forward to working with him more on issues of importance to our members and to the community. We would ask that you favorably consider him and approve his confirmation in the role of Director for another term. Thank you for your consideration of our support.



March 5, 2019

The Honorable Russel E. Ruderman, Chair  
The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

Re: GM 605 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, PANKAJ BHANOT, for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022.

Dear Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of GM 605, the confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services. We have had the pleasure to work with Mr. Bhanot over the years and he has proven himself to be a hardworking partner dedicated to the wellbeing of the people of Hawaii.

Mr. Bhanot has served the people of Hawaii well in various capacities at the Department of Human Services since 1999. He has served admirably in his current role as Director since 2016 and has also served as Deputy Director from 2010 to 2012 and again in 2015 to 2016. Mr. Bhanot has also held several roles in the Department's Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD) as Division Administrator, Employment and Child Care Program Administrator, and Food Stamp Employment and Training Program Specialist respectively. Prior to working at the Department of Human Services, Mr. Bhanot was the Family Development Director at Kauai Economic Opportunity, Inc.

We believe that his extensive experience coupled with a Juris Doctorate from the Law Centre of the University of Delhi, a Master of Law (LLM) from Cornell University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Hindu College at the University of Delhi, qualifies Mr. Bhanot to continue in his role as the Director of Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to support GM 605. Your consideration of the confirmation of Mr. Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Hawaii State Department of Human Services is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Pono Chong  
Vice President, Government Relations

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/6/2019 8:42:53 AM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization                                       | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Laura Smith  | Testifying for Goodwill Industries of Hawaii, Inc. | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

See attached letter of support.





**HAWAI'I PUBLIC  
POLICY ADVOCATES**

Hawaii Public Policy Advocates, LLC

1099 Alakea St., Suite 2530  
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Telephone: (808) 447 1840  
Email: [info@hawaiipublicpolicy.com](mailto:info@hawaiipublicpolicy.com)  
Website: [www.hawaiipublicpolicy.com](http://www.hawaiipublicpolicy.com)

DATE: Friday, March 8, 2019  
TIME: 2:45PM  
PLACE: Conference Room 016  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Re: Nomination Pankaj Bhanot for Director of the Department of Human Services (GM 605)

Aloha Chair Ruderman, Vice-Chair Rhoads, and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today in strong support on the nomination of Pankaj Bhanot for the position of Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS). I have known Mr. Bhanot for over 15 years and during my interactions with him, I always found him hardworking, conscientious, and dedicated to the task at hand. Most of all, I always found Pankaj to genuinely care about the people he served and for all those who reside in the state of Hawai'i. Pankaj's strong character and leadership is why the people of Hawai'i need Pankaj to lead DHS.

I humbly ask that you consent to the nomination of Pankaj Bhanot for the position of Director of DHS and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephen Teves



**SanHi**

GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW PARTNERSHIP

DATE: March 6, 2019

TO: Senator Russell E. Ruderman  
Chair, Committee on Human Services

*Submitted Via Capitol Website*

FROM: Gary M. Slovin

RE: **GM 605 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, PANKAJ BHANOT, for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022.**  
**Hearing Date: Friday, March 8, 2019 at 2:45 p.m.**  
**Conference Room: 016**

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Dear Chair Ruderman and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

I submit this testimony in strong support of Pankaj Bhanot to be the Director of the Department of Human Services.

Pankaj has obviously served the Department in various capacities over a long period of time. From that experience he has gained knowledge of this complex agency that has enabled him to manage the department in an excellent manner. He and former Director Rachael Wong formed an enviable team that accomplished a great deal, and Pankaj has not missed a beat as he took over the role of Director.

He is a person of high character and competence who inspires the DHS employees as they perform challenging tasks that serve the needs of the larger community. We are fortunate that Pankaj is so dedicated to serving.



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March 8, 2019  
Conference Room 016  
2:45 p.m.

To: The Honorable Chair Russell E. Ruderman  
The Honorable Vice Chair Karl Rhoads  
Senate Committee on Human Services

From: 'Ohana Health Plan  
Rachel Wilkinson, Government Affairs Manager

Re: GM 605, Relating to the Nominee for Director of the Department of  
Human Services; **In Support**

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'Ohana Health Plan ('Ohana) is a member of the WellCare Health Plans, Inc.'s ("WellCare") family of companies and provides healthcare for Hawaii residents statewide. Since 2009, 'Ohana has utilized WellCare's national experience to develop a Hawaii-specific care model that addresses local members' healthcare and health coordination needs. By focusing on the state's Medicaid and Medicare population, 'Ohana serves Hawaii's most vulnerable residents: low-income, elderly, disabled, and individuals with complex medical issues. Our mission is to help our members lead better, healthier lives.

'Ohana Health Plan offers our **support** of GM 605 and the confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services.

As a Medicaid health plan that works closely with Hawaii's Department of Human Services (DHS), we are very encouraged by the many years of experience that Mr. Bhanot brings to this position. We look forward to continuing our relationship with DHS under Mr. Bhanot's leadership and working with the Med-QUEST Division on behalf of our members.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.

**Pankaj Bhanot**  
**Nominee for DHS Director**

March 3, 2019

TO: The Honorable Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot

SUBJECT: **GM 605 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, Pankaj Bhanot, for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022.**

Hearing: March 8, 2019, 02:45 p.m.  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

Thank you Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, Senator Ihara, Senator Riviere, and Senator Fevella, for this opportunity to testify in support of my nomination for the Director of Hawai'i Department of Human Services (DHS). I am very thankful to Governor Ige for renominating and entrusting me with the awesome responsibility of leading DHS for another term. It is a great honor and privilege to serve our great State and lead DHS and work with almost 2,400 outstanding colleagues and many community partners on a daily basis to make a difference in the lives of 1 in 4 residents, including 40% plus children of Hawaii.

My comments will focus on what DHS has accomplished over the last 4 years, unfinished priorities, challenges we face, and future opportunities knocking on our door:

**MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS** – DHS, over the last four years, and particularly during the last two and a half years, was able to restore belief, honor and trust in government through various strategies and initiatives that included input from our colleagues across DHS and executive, and the residents and community partners across our Aloha State.

‘Ohana Nui Framework – In 2016, DHS, rolled out ‘Ohana Nui framework (multigenerational approach) to streamline and integrate the human services delivery system. The principle tenets of ‘Ohana Nui framework are: (1) identify the root causes of poverty and alleviate poverty by addressing the social determinants of health and well-being; (2) concurrent provision of necessary supports for basic needs in the areas of food, health, housing, education and economic supports and opportunities to social capital to all individuals of a family unit (child and adults); (3) meet families where they are; (4) engage families and communities to redesign the existing and build new programs and services; and (5) Hawaii’s families are self-sufficient; they are active participants in an intergenerational cycle of opportunity.

First Comprehensive Strategic Plan – ‘Ohana Nui framework, Article IX, Section 3, of the State Constitution, and Aloha Spirit statute (Chapter 5-7.5, HRS), became the foundation of the first comprehensive strategic plan of the DHS. The vision of DHS is that the people of Hawaii are thriving. The mission of DHS is to encourage self-sufficiency and support the well-being of individuals, families and communities in Hawaii. The first comprehensive strategic plan seeks to attain three key goals: (1) improve the self-sufficiency and well-being of Hawaii’s individuals and families; (2) improve service integration and delivery to develop solutions for sustainable outcomes, government efficiency and transparency; and (3) improve staff health and development.

Goal Number 1: Improve self-sufficiency and well-being of Hawaii’s individuals and families.

Family Assessment Center – The Family Assessment Center (FAC) opened in September 2016, and piloted a new approach to addressing family homelessness. It is a public-private partnership that offers wraparound services to families staying at the facility. The goal of the FAC is to quickly transition families to permanent housing and provide tools for the families to retain housing over time. In its first two years of operation, the FAC has a 95% housing placement rate with an average length of stay of 79 days.

Implementation of Diversion Programs – DHS and the Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness have worked with other departments - including the Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Public Safety (PSD) – to implement diversion programs that connect homeless individuals who encounter the mental health, substance use treatment, or criminal justice systems and quickly connect these individuals to housing and other supportive services.

One example of the new diversion approach is the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program launched in April 2018 for the Chinatown and Iwilei areas on Oahu. Since launching, the LEAD program has enrolled 30 chronically homeless individuals referred by State and City law enforcement. These individuals receive supportive services instead of being criminalized.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Bonuses – DHS BESSD has won high performance bonuses for the last three years (2015-2017) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for providing access to SNAP benefits across our State.

Hawaii 'Ohana Nui Project Expansion (HOPE) – In 2018, as part of its overall program improvement strategy, MQD’s strategic plan envisions Hawaii's healthy families and healthy communities. Through renewal of the State's 1115 Medicaid Waiver, the goals of MQD are:

- Triple aim: better care, better health, and sustainable costs,
- Align to common framework: “A multigenerational, culturally appropriate approach that invests in children and families over the life-cycle to nurture well-being and improve individual and population health outcomes.”

Addressing Sex Trafficking in Hawaii – In May 2017, the Department’s Child Welfare Services and attached agency Commission on the Status of Women entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Judiciary, HPD, DOH, DOE, Prosecutor’s office, and Homeland Security to examine and implement trauma informed approaches to serving child victims of trafficking.

And, our CWS rolled out a new hotline number developed solely to respond to cases of child sex trafficking.

Equal Pay Bill – During the 2018 Legislative session, the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women drafted and advocated successfully for the passage of an Equal Pay bill to ensure that women are not penalized for discussing their wages in the workplace. This is a huge step forward for gender equity in the state of Hawaii.

Stable and Affordable Housing and Services – HPHA has successfully provided and expanded stable affordable housing and services that improves quality of life and enhanced safety of over 30,000 individuals and the communities in which they reside in. HPHA was also designated “High Performer” for the last two years for its Section 8 program by HUD.

Our Commission on Fatherhood successfully brought their meetings state wide and to neighbor islands, to better understand the diverse needs of fathers across the state.

Goal Number 2: Improve services integration and delivery to develop solutions for sustainable outcomes.

DHS Procurement Manual – With one of the largest state budgets and multiple programs, DHS procures a large amount of diverse and complex services across the State. To improve our procurement practices, we launched the DHS Procurement Manual in December 2018 for use by all programs. Standardizing the DHS procurement process will improve contracts for services, enable more consistent evaluation of services, as well as assist in establishing performance measures for analysis. This will also enable DHS employees to better navigate a procurement system that can be difficult to understand.

DHS Hawaii Administrative Rules – To standardize the department's process to promulgate and amend administrative rules, in conjunction with the Governor's Office initiative to streamline the

rules drafting and approval process to become nearly paperless, we implemented a DHS Hawaii Administrative Rules Manual in December 2018.

DHS Frequently Asked Questions – In 2018, DHS developed a department-wide frequently asked questions (FAQ) resource to share information about the services we provide, eligibility, locations, phone numbers, and other information to assist clients, employees and partners in their understanding what we do to help the individuals and families of Hawai'i.

Health Analytics Program – In 2018, we established the Health Analytics Program within MQD. to allow state funded medical claims to be collected and analyzed to make possible the examination of utilization, and overall population health to address rising costs of health services.

Improving Communication and Financial Integrity in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Under the leadership of Maureen Bates, DVR Administrator, DVR has undertaken unprecedented steps to transform processes to improve internal and external communication and financial integrity across programs and contracts to ensure accurate accounting of federal and State funds expenditure.

Goal Number 3: Improve staff health and development.

'Ohana Nui Engineers – In 2017-2018, starting internally, innovative cross program DHS staff were identified to begin discussions and work on how to transform the culture of DHS to change the way we deliver services from a silo-ed system to an integrated and multi-generational model. Improving cross system program knowledge and establishing trusted professional relationships has led to improved communication and development of multi-program solutions such as data mapping, redesign of information and data sharing processes, and expanding the knowledge of resources already available to recipients.



Investment in Professional Development – In 2017-2018, in partnership with the Department of Human Resources Development and One Shared Future, a private not for profit, the 'Ohana Nui Engineers and our colleagues from the Department of Health, participated in strength finding and team building process. The 'Ohana Nui Engineers identified pilot projects that are in various stages of development.

Attention to Staff Wellness – Two pilots are moving forward with attention to staff wellness.

From One Shared Future cohort one: Forgive for Good Workshop led by staff from multiple DHS divisions and offices provide facilitation and training to an approach to healing and forgiveness championed by Dr. Fred Luskin, author and lecturer from Stanford University.

From cohort three: staff from the Social Services Division that respond to reports of child and adult abuse and neglect developed a Staff Support Team for self-care. The intensity of the work, especially when tragedy may occur, requires a way for peers to support each other, and to have regular space and time dedicated to self-care. Daily meditation and mindfulness exercises are held every morning in the downtown offices and are well attended.

DHS Portal – Based on results from a statewide staff survey, to improve internal communication to the 2,300 DHS staff located state wide and to improve the DHS team experience, in April 2018, we launched the DHS Portal: an internal website that allows Director's office to communicate uniformly across the state. Content on the DHS Portal includes department-wide news, staff directory, and information on department initiatives. Additional content will be added for each division, staff offices, and attached agencies. During recent natural disasters, this Portal served as the centralized source for DHS staff for all agency issued storm and lava related information.

DHS In the News – Intended to improve communication and support staff morale, initiated in 2017, DHS in the News is an email sent to all DHS staff to inform them of pending media

inquiries, positive and negative, related to DHS. Staff have responded positively to these emails even when the subject matter is challenging or critical.

Fair Hearing Officers – The legislature passed Act 71 (2018) establishing fair hearing officer positions exempt from civil service. Creating DHS staff positions comprised of licensed and experienced attorneys, improves the oversight and integrity of the departments' multiple programs, provides consistency and continuity in reviewing administrative decisions, conducting administrative hearings, and the rendering of decisions. Having available staff provides timely and appropriate access to due process of recipients and service providers statewide.

Wiki Wiki Hire Pilot – This is a collaborative effort to reduce vacancies in the Child Welfare Services Branch (CWS). Initiated in cohort 2 of the professional development project, the DHS Human Resources Office, and staff from the Department of Human Resource Development (DHRD), and CWS staff reviewed existing hiring processes, reduced the number of steps involved, pre-identified positions and CWS point of contacts, and trained specially selected CWS staff to conduct hiring interviews. The changes reduced the amount of time from application to interview, from 60 days or more, to approximately 2-1/2 weeks. The pilot has already resulted in 30 plus new hires at CWS and other divisions are interested in redesigning their hiring processes.

**UNFINISHED PRIORITIES** – During 2018, DHS embarked on multiple critical priorities that are in different stages of completion. It will take additional 2-4 years to accomplish these priorities and lay down a strong foundation for future streamlining and integration of human services across our Aloha State.

BESSD Eligibility System (BES). Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division entered into a contract with UNISYS to build its eligibility system on the DHS Enterprise Platform. DHS built the enterprise platform and KOLEA (Medicaid) application between 2012-2013 using 90-10 funding under the Affordable Care Act. We are anticipating the completion of the BESSD project by the end of calendar year 2022.

Child Welfare Information System (CWIS). Social Services Division in the middle of seeking relevant approvals from the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to issue a request for proposals and eventually enter into a contract to build the CWIS system on the DHS Enterprise Platform. The cost of build the CWIS system is shared at a 50-50 level between the State and Federal government.

MQD Business Process Transformation. MQD entered into a contract with Barry and Dunn consulting firm to document the “as is” processes we currently use and propose a “to be” process to streamline our service delivery to our current and future recipients. This effort is undertaken to build on the fantastic gains we attained with our KOLEA application.

1115 Medicaid Waiver. We are anticipating the approval of our 1115 Medicaid Waiver by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare, U.S. DHHS, by early spring.

**CHALLENGES** – Over the last couple of years DHS is facing multiple challenges that are a great cause of concern for Hawaii and its residents.

Congressional efforts to reauthorize TANF and SNAP. The proposed Congressional changes to TANF and SNAP if approved would have negative impact on Hawaii’s ability to provide basic food and cash assistance benefits to its needy population.

President’s Budget Proposals. President’s budget proposal over the last couple of years repeatedly proposed deep cuts in the SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, CHIP, SSBG, LIHEAP and other safety net programs. The overall impact on Hawaii, if these safety net programs are cut or reduced, would result in serious reduction in benefits, programs, and services. In such a scenario, DHS would need hundreds of million dollars in general funds to make up for the lost federal funds. We will continue to work with your office, State Legislature, and Congressional Delegation to advocate for reasonable changes to the safety net programs and urge Congress to

not make any drastic changes that would negatively impact indigent and working poor families and individuals.

## **FUTURE ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND GOALS –**

Establish Ohana Zones to Address Homelessness on all islands with a primary focus of housing homeless population and address the basic needs of the homeless, and where the state could provide “wrap around” services including health care and transportation for the residents. DHS will work collaboratively with the Governor, Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness, and Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness, and all interested stakeholders to accomplish this project.

Assist DOE in Maximization of Medicaid Claims. The media and Legislature has expressed concerns that Hawaii is potentially missing out on tens of millions of dollars in federal reimbursements from claims related to teaching Medicaid-insured special education students, according to state officials and a review of federal data. We are working with DOE and other interested stakeholders, including the Legislature, to identify areas of concerns and work collaboratively with DOE to maximize the drawdown of Medicaid claims.

Competitive Procurement of Medicaid Health Plans. MQD is working with CMS, USDHHS, and the State Procurement Office and Attorney General to determine the best vehicle to procure the health plan services effective July 1, 2020. We have issued a request for information (RFI) seeking comments from public on criteria for a competitive procurement versus a minimum standard procurement; re-procurement of the community care services, and Value-based Payments (VBP) and Alternative Payment Models (APMs). Such information would allow us to seek quality healthcare services for our recipients.

Restructuring and Transformation of Child Welfare Services through functional reorganization of the Social Services Division; and implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act programs and services focusing on the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Establish Central Investigations Office to consolidate the investigations function across the department. Such consolidation will result in reduction in fraud, abuse and waste of public assistance programs; enforcement of civil rights, sex trafficking laws, electronic benefit trafficking, and provider or vendor fraud.

Future of Hawaii Human Services in 2035. In collaboration with the Institute for Alternative Futures and Kresge Foundation, Hawaii will be participating this summer in the Human Progress and Human Services 2035 project. This project will answer two key questions from Hawaii's perspective:

- (1) What is the future of human needs and human process?
- (2) How will human services be provided in the future?

Human services respond to human needs, often shaped by poverty, exclusion, violence, and environmental events. The future of delivery of Human services will be shaped by trends and forces in the economy, employment, automation and other technology, policies, social attitudes and values (particularly equity and inclusion), and environmental conditions – as well as the visions of communities and human service providers. To engage their human services community in the development of scenarios that considered the national trends and forecasts as well as their own challenges and opportunities to develop 2035 scenarios. Later this summer, we are planning to engage a group of community and human service leaders to set into their scenarios, consider the implications for current goals and strategies, and develop recommendations for future policies, operations, and budget priorities.

In addition to completing the unfinished priorities and working on the new organizational objectives and goals, DHS will focus on (1) reinventing of DHS with agile service delivery. We will create a more open and collaborative culture to stimulate innovation; apply cloud and cognitive process automation to improve business agility; and Respond rapidly to disruptions,

and new waves of citizen and customer demands; (2) marrying data with design. We will use human centered design thinking to make sense of the data you collect to create authentic citizen and customer experiences; bring designers and data analysts together with citizens, businesses and other ecosystem partners; and focus on what citizens and businesses want, not on what's technically feasible; and (3) liberate talent. We will be clear and transparent in our expectations and communication. We will encourage people to use their ingenuity, experiment, take risks and fail fast in the safety of the lab; and look for staff who can communicate well and are comfortable working in cross-functional teams.

We can't accomplish these goals and objectives without the support of my DHS colleagues; my colleagues across the executive, our traditional community partners, our non-traditional community partners, and our Legislature.

None of my accomplishments would have been possible without the loving support, care, and encouragement provided by my family and friends; listening to and learning from elders, particularly my maternal grandmother who guided me to a career in public service; pursuit of education and excellence; self-belief; commitment to making a difference; courage to challenge the status quo and bring about change; and not ever quitting.

Lastly, I want to thank all my friends, colleagues across the executive, and community partners who took the time to submit testimony or who came here today to support my nomination. The opportunity to continue to serve the people of Hawaii as the Director of the DHS is a humbling one, and I am excited for the opportunity to build on the foundation DHS team has already laid down. I humbly ask for your favorable consideration of my appointment, and I am here to answer any questions you may have.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify and considering me for the Director of Hawai'i Department of Human Services.

March 1, 2019

The Honorable Russell E. Ruderman  
Chair, Senate Committee on Human Services  
States Capitol Room 216  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: GM605 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, PANKAJ BHANOT, for a term to expire at noon on 12 –05 –2022.

Dear Senator Ruderman:

I support the nomination of Pankaj Bhanot as Director of the Department of Human Services. He has the legal training, knowledge of federal and state policies, and thorough understanding of the state system. His years of experience makes him highly regarded among peers on the national level and well-known among the international community.

More importantly, he has the compassion and passion instilled and inspired in him from his youth to serve others – to do the right thing – which is also in alignment with the Governor's agenda. His integrity and sincere belief in people, namely the people of Hawaii, is evident in how he makes every day decisions and interacts with others.

Pankaj's warm smile and the way he exudes Aloha makes him approachable. He is generous of his time and his willing to help others no matter their race, religion or economic background. He treats everyone with respect and genuine fondness.

Pankaj's years of experience in the Department of Human Services has molded him into an ideal director because he knows what kind of leadership is needed to not only run the department but to move it forward by increasing its efficiency and effectiveness through technology, morale/vision enhancement, and leadership training, creating a more cohesive and accessible system.

In addition, Pankaj is dedicated and totally committed to his wife and son, extended family, both near and far.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katherine Korenaga', written in a cursive style.

Katherine Korenaga  
1521 Punahou Street #601  
Honolulu, HI 96822

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/3/2019 9:28:28 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier<br/>Position</b> | <b>Present at<br/>Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Brysen Poulton      | Individual          | Support                       | Yes                           |

Comments:



March 3, 2019

To: Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Scott Nakasone, Individual

RE: GM 605 - Consideration and confirmation to the Director Of The Department Of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, PANKAJ BHANOT, for a term to expire 12-05-2022

Position: Strong Support

Comments:

Since Pankaj's arrival at the Department of Human Services (DHS) in 1999 as an emergency hire, he has dutifully pursued his mission with the passion to make a positive difference in the way clients are serviced, how services are delivered, and how people in general should be treated with respect, honesty and compassion. Through his progression of duties and responsibilities he has undertaken in the Department, from a Program Specialist, to a Program Administrator, Assistant and then Division Administrator, a Deputy Director, a Director, and to now a nominee for a Director's appointment for a second term, Pankaj has never wavered in his passion to make a positive difference and to look for better ways to get things done.

Pankaj's passion is acutely aligned with the DHS mission, "To provide timely, efficient and effective programs, services and benefits for the purpose of achieving the outcome of empowering Hawaii's most vulnerable people; and to expand their capacity for self-sufficiency, self-determination, independence, healthy choices, quality of life, and personal dignity." And his experience and understanding of how State, Counties, Federal and community partners all interact for the purposes of servicing the people of Hawaii makes him a logical choice for the appointment of Director of Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Pankaj's nomination.

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/4/2019 11:39:20 AM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Bhanu Vellanki | Individual   | Support            | Yes                |

Comments:

Statement of: Bhanu Vellanki, Individual

Testimony presented before the

**House Committee on Human Services**

Friday, March 08, 2019

State Capitol, Conference Room 016

In consideration of

**GM605 RELATING TO****CONFIRMATION DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

Chair Russell E. Ruderman, Vice Chair Karl Rhodes, and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

I offer my **Strong Support** for GM605 for the consideration and confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of Department of Human Services, (DHS).

I have closely worked with Pankaj while I worked at the State ICSD while supporting various technology systems at DHS. During this time, I observed his dynamic leadership abilities and his strong business acumen. Pankaj used these abilities to improve the business processes and efficiencies at DHS.

Pankaj is a very well-respected leader at the State, DHS and within the community including work with cultural charities.

His confirmation is important to continue the level of leadership, strategic direction and continuity for DHS and the constituents across the State being served.

I urge the senate to confirm the appointment of Pankaj Bhanot, as the director of Department of Human Services.

Best Regards,

Bhanu Vellanki

808-225-0652

To: The Honorable Russell Ruderman  
Senate Committee on Human Services  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

From: Dean Senda, Individual

Subject: GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 605 DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, PANKAJ BHANOT, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE DECEMBER 5, 2022

Aloha, Chair Ruderman, Vice-Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee on Human Services. I am submitting this testimony as a private citizen before the Committee to testify on Governor's Message No. 605 for the consideration and confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of Department of Human Services (DHS).

I have known Pankaj personally since 2010. During his tenure with the State in various leadership positions at the Department of Human Services, he has demonstrated that he has the abilities not only to lead with a passion to empower Hawaii's most vulnerable people but to do it in an effective, efficient and innovative ways.

His confirmation will ensure that the department continues to provide much of the needed services to the people of Hawaii, while maintaining a strong and effective working relationship with the federal government programs including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Pankaj has the education, work experience, desire, and capacity to be an excellent leader for the Department of Human Services as is already reflected since his Directorship began in 2017. He represents the type of leadership I believe the State will need to help them continue to develop and implement solutions to address the State's challenges for the upcoming years.

I urge the Senate to confirm his re-appointment of my friend, Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services.

Dean Senda

To: The Honorable Russell Ruderman  
Senate Committee on Human Services  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

From: Tom Yau, Individual

Subject: GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 605 DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, PANKAJ BHANOT, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE DECEMBER 5, 2022

Chair Ruderman, Vice-Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

I offer my **Strong Support** for GM 605 for the consideration and confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of Department of Human Services (DHS).

I have known Pankaj for over 18 years and throughout those years Pankaj Bhanot has consistently demonstrated his leadership skills and concern for the health and welfare of the citizens of the State of Hawaii through his service at the Department of Human Services. His unwavering dedication to the less fortunate in Hawaii serves as a role model for all of us who live in this wonderful State.

His confirmation will ensure that the less fortunate in our State have a clear and forceful voice in government and has someone who will be looking out for their best interest and well-being. And the relationships he has nurtured and fostered with a number of federal agencies throughout his years will continue to pay dividends for the State of Hawaii. His confirmation as Director is critical to the health and welfare of hundreds of thousands of citizens in the State.

I urge the Senate to confirm his re-appointment of my friend, Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services.



Tom Yau

TESTIMONY OF JO ANN UCHIDA TAKEUCHI  
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
HUMAN SERVICES

Friday, March 8, 2019 2:45 PM  
Conf. Rm 016

G.M. 605

**Testimony in support of Governor's Message No. 605  
Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the  
Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, PANKAJ BHANOT  
for a term to expire at noon on 12-05-2022**

TO THE HONORABLE RUSSELL E. RUDERMAN, CHAIR,  
THE HONORABLE KARL RHOADS, VICE CHAIR,  
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

I am writing to express my strong **support** of the appointment of PANKAJ BHANOT to serve as the Director of the Department of Human Services, for a term to expire on December 5, 2022. My name is Jo Ann Uchida Takeuchi and I am submitting this supporting testimony in my personal capacity.

I have had the opportunity to work with Director Bhanot for several years in his capacity as Deputy Director and then Director of the Department of Human Services and in my capacity as Deputy Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Director Bhanot, despite his very busy schedule, is generous with his time, expertise and knowledge and is friendly and gracious, collaborative and helpful in addressing issues of mutual concern. Director Bhanot is intelligent and hardworking, and is an individual who has the temperament, experience, ability and wisdom to effectively represent the Department of Human Services.

I believe Director Bhanot is and will continue to be an asset to the administration and to the state, and respectfully request that you recommend advise and consent of his nomination as Director of the Department of Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of GM 605.

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/4/2019 3:23:34 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Joel Bongco  | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads. and Members of the Committee on Human Services,

I offer my **Strong Support** for GM605 for the consideration and confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of Department of Human Services, (DHS).

Pankaj Bhanot has been in a leadership capacity at DHS for many years and under his leadership he has provided efficient, effective and innovation in the services that the department provides to the citizens of the State of Hawaii.

His confirmation will ensure that the department continues to provide much needed services to the people of Hawaii, while maintaining a strong and effective working relationship with federal government programs including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This directorship position is critical to the wellbeing of hundreds of thousands of constituents in the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

Joel Bongco

TESTIMONY OF DAMIEN ELEFANTE  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES  
FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2019 2:45 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 016

GOV. MSG NO. 605

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,  
PANKAJ BHANOT, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE AT NOON ON 12-05-2022.

Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and members of the Committee. I am  
testifying as an individual and I am in support of Pankaj Bhanot's confirmation as the  
Director of the Department of Human Services.

His extensive experience at the Department of Human Services helped him  
develop an understanding of the department, which is valuable for a Director of Human  
Services. He has a long history and experience in dealing with issues related to  
benefits, employment and social services programs. His continued commitment to  
serve the people of the State in the Department of Human Services is an asset.

I urge you to support the confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the  
Department of Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Testimony to the Senate Committee on  
Human Services

The Thirtieth Legislature  
Regular Session of 2019

Friday, March 8, 2019  
2:45 p.m.

Testimony on **Governor's Message No. 605**, Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation as the **Director of the Department of Human Services**, Gubernatorial Nominee, **Pankaj Bhanot**, for a Term to Expire on December 5, 2022.

To the Honorable Russell E. Ruderman, Chair, the Honorable Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Catherine Awakuni Colón, and I enthusiastically write in **support** of the appointment of Pankaj Bhanot to serve as the Director of the Department of Human Services, for a term to expire on December 5, 2022.

Over the last four years, I have had the opportunity to work with and closely observe Mr. Bhanot, as he served as the deputy director and director for the Department of Human Services. I found Mr. Bhanot be a dedicated and passionate public servant who is collaborative, thoughtful, and tireless in his approach to his work. With two decades of working for the State of Hawaii, Mr. Bhanot has demonstrated he possesses the skills, tenacity, temperament, and aptitude needed to lead the Department of Human Services and to maintain and improve Hawaii's programs and services that serve as safety nets for our most vulnerable residents.

I firmly believe Mr. Bhanot will continue to be a valued and highly productive member of Governor Ige's cabinet, and respectfully request that you recommend approval of his nomination as Director of the Department of Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to support G.M. No. 605. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.

Date: March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019

To: The Honorable Russell Ruderman  
Senate Committee on Human Services  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

From: Rex Ding, Individual

Subject: GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 605 DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, PANKAJ BHANOT, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE DECEMBER 5, 2022

Chair Ruderman, Vice-Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

I am writing to offer my **Firm Support** for GM 605 for the consideration and confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of Department of Human Services (DHS).

Over the past 16 years I have known Pankaj, I have always been impressed by his knowledge, insights, passion and vision to help improving the lives of the needy and less fortunate families in the community we all call home. Pankaj has worked tirelessly to streamline government service delivery and to maximize the limited resources available to improve the welfare of the citizens of the State of Hawaii. His leadership is an exemplary model for everyone to follow.

By confirming Pankaj as the Director of Human Services will allow the continuation of building on the solid foundation Pankaj has achieved in his first term. Under his leadership, the less fortunate can have a champion for their well-being, the staff and partner agencies can have a "light house" to guide their missions, the rest of the citizens can be assured that accountability and transparency are always maintained.

I sincerely request the Senate to confirm the re-appointment of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services.

Rex Ding

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/5/2019 3:34:58 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| colin kippen | Individual   | Support            | Yes                |

## Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for Pankaj Bhanot to be reappointed as the Director of the Department of Human Services.

I came to know Mr. Bhanot when I was serving as the Director of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness and as the State Coordinator on Homelessness during the end of the Abercrombie and the beginning of the Ige administrations. At the time, Mr. Bhanot was serving as the Deputy Administrator of the Department of Human Services.

While the position I held was much needed, it had neither a budget nor any full time staff assigned to assist me in accomplishing my mission of ending homelessness. Mr. Bhanot was very helpful in providing me with a place to operate out of, including access to a computer, a desk, and a phone. Eventually, he was able to locate funding to enable me to hire an assistant, which is something I very much appreciated given all of the individuals, organizations and programs I was attempting to coordinate in my quest to reduce and end homelessness.

A number of improvements were made during my tenure as the Homeless Coordinator to what is affectionately known as the "homeless industrial complex" consisting of 9-1-1 services, emergency rooms, police and fire responders, jails, hospitals, emergency homeless shelters, transitional homeless shelters, homeless outreach workers, section 8 and public housing, addiction and chemical dependency service providers, and the mental health treatment system. While the advances made and the understandings gained about how these discrete systems worked individually and in combination with one another was the fruit of many meetings and many individuals, Mr. Bhanot was a ready ally to assist me however and wherever he could in gaining access to the individuals and subject matter experts known to him who could assist me. In retrospect, this is something that was very helpful and which I very much appreciated.

Pankaj thoroughly understands the Human Service Systems he is tasked with managing from a fiscal, personnel, political, service delivery, and program beneficiary perspective and is open and direct in his communication style both within and outside the Department of Human Services.

Mr. Bhanot is an exceptional manager who has accomplished much since his original appointment as the Director of Human Services. I would urge his name be forwarded to the entire senate for a vote and confirmation as the Director of Human Services as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Colin Kippen

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/5/2019 9:48:18 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Dana Balansag | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

## Comments:

My name is Dana Balansag, and I am an individual testifying in strong support of Pankaj Bhanot being confirmed as the Director for the Department of Human Services (DHS). Mr. Bhanot has been a dutiful civil servant for DHS for two decades, much of which was under the Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD). Because Mr. Bhanot has worked for DHS, he understands the mission of the department, the importance of the services the department provides, and the essential role the department's employees have in ensuring DHS fulfills its mission. DHS also has completed its departmental strategic plan under Director Bhanot. The DHS strategic plan includes goals for improving the well-being of Hawaii's families and residents, improving the delivery and integration of DHS services, and improving the health and development of DHS employees.

Mr. Bhanot is not afraid of implementing improvements needed to ensure effective and efficient services are provided to families and children receiving DHS services, as evidenced by the reengineering of the business processes completed within BESSD under his leadership to ensure that applications for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and financial assistance benefits are processed and eligibility determinations are completed in a timely manner in compliance with federal requirements.

Mr. Bhanot has been a key proponent of moving DHS into the 21st century technology by driving the implementation of the electronic case file content management within BESSD as well as pursuing capital improvement project funds from the Legislature to bring BESSD's and Social Services Division's legacy data systems onto the same platform as the Med-Quest Division's KOLEA system. The DHS Enterprise initiative for the upgraded data systems within DHS will result in increased efficiencies amongst the divisions in DHS, tracking of access to and utilization of services within DHS for families and children, and better outcomes for families and children.

Mr. Bhanot is also continuing the `Ohana Nui initiative for DHS to align and streamline existing programs and funding to improve efficiencies and outcomes to achieve the greatest return on investment for Hawaii's multi-generational communities and families. Mr. Bhanot will continue his dedication to work toward improving DHS with the

infrastructure and support needed to serve Hawaii's families and children and ensuring DHS is accountable to the Legislature, Governor, and the people of Hawaii.

Please confirm Mr. Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services.

March 6, 2019

Elliot Kano

45-602 Hulinuu Pl.

Kaneohe, Hawaii

To: Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair, Honorable Senator Karl Rhoades, Vice Chair

And Committee Members

I am delighted that Governor Ige has recommended Mr. Pankaj Bhanot, to serve as the Department of Human Services Director for a second term.

As the former administrator for Hawaii's Adult Protective and Community Services Branch, I can unequivocally attest to Mr. Bhanot's dedication over the past four years to serve Hawaii's vulnerable adults and children. Mr. Bhanot's unwavering support to the offices and divisions of the Department of Human Services resulted in the provision of efficient and effective services to the people of Hawaii.

Personally, I knew Mr. Bhanot before he was appointed and confirmed by this committee four years ago. I am proud to call Mr. Bhanot a dear friend, who possesses righteous morals and values and cares deeply about others. He is supported by his awesome wife Lynn who gives him the strength to work tirelessly for Hawaii's vulnerable people. I believe this committee have witnessed Mr. Bhanot's dedication to serving those in need over the past four years and look favorably upon his commitment and service to the people of Hawaii. I humbly request this committee confirm Mr. Bhanot's appointment as Director of Human Services department.

Sincerely,

Elliot Kano

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/6/2019 11:54:16 AM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Stephen      | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

## Comments:

Dear Sirs/Madams - My name is Stephen Arita, Human Resources Director for one of Hawaii's finest private school institutions, and I would like to testify in favor of the nomination of Mr. Pankaj Bhanot for the position of Director of Human Services. I have know Mr. Bhanot for the past four years as part of a group of hacker golfers who meet each Sunday at the Ala Wai Golf Course to play golf. There and during the course of many rounds of golf, I have found Mr. Bhanot to be competitive, friendly, smart and encouraging. But, his greatest attribute, in my humble opinion, is his great knowledge on a wide breadth of topics. Which is very useful for a person in a position of high authority such as this. But, he is not perfect, and if he could only fix his slice, he would be a complete man.

Humbly submitted,



TO: Senate Human Services Committee

FROM: Wilfredo Tungol (Phone 387-7412)

RE: GM 605 (Confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot for Director of DHS)

Date of Hearing: March 8, 2019, 2:45 pm

Chair Rudderman and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of confirming Pankaj Bhanot as the director of the Department of Human Services. I have the privilege of working with Pankaj when I was assigned to the Director's Office as a Projects Specialist from 2011 to 2014. Pankaj was then the deputy director and later returned to his position as the BESSD Administrator for personal reasons. He returned as deputy director under Governor Ige and later served as Director in Governor Ige's previous term. Recognizing Pankaj accomplishments, he was reappointed to serve again in this very important position.

Pankaj was well respected in the department as a leader and as an administrator. As the lead manager for the Business Process Reengineering (BPR), he improved the processing time for SNAP applications, thus meeting the federal requirements and avoiding further sanctions by the federal government and also meeting the federal court's injunction arising from a lawsuit on delays of SNAP processing. He is a collaborator, a dedicated public servant, and a visionary leader. He is also a man of integrity and transparency.

Pankaj is a collaborative leader who will help Governor Ige's administration in battling the homelessness crisis that the state is currently facing. He will also collaborate with the Department of Health to ensure that every homeless residents of the state gets the proper support services that they need in order to be taken care of. In my almost three years of working with him, I have observed his ability to lead and inspire those around him. He is well respected and liked by both colleagues and subordinates in DHS. I am certain that he will make a difference in the quality of life for our impoverished residents of the state.

I respectfully ask you to act favorably to confirm Pankaj as DHS director.

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/7/2019 7:33:55 AM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By    | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Nalani Fujimori | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the reappointment of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of Human Services. I provide this testimony in my individual capacity.

I have known Pankaj for many years and have worked with him while he was in different roles at DHS. He has always been responsive and thoughtful in his approaches while always keeping in mind the goal of the department to provide services to state residents. He is someone that I respect and enjoy working with.

I feel that his experience as a part of the Department for so many years has also served him well as the Director of Human Services.

Mahalo again for this opportunity to testify in support of Pankaj's confirmation.

Aloha,

Nalani Fujimori Kaina

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/6/2019 3:02:24 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By      | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Kathleen Fujimoto | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

## Comments:

Honorable members of the Hawaii State Legislature,

I am writing in strong support of the confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot, as Director of the Department of Human Services. As an administrator, Pankaj has inspired the employees of our Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to strive for more than what is acceptable in an effort to give exceptional service to the vulnerable citizens that we serve. His accomplishments and goals as laid out in his resume are a reflection of the very many positive projects that he has spearheaded and put in place. The Department of Human Services is fortunate to benefit from the energy, brilliance, and inspiration of Pankaj Bhanot. He leads by example and with encouragement, making sure to include all toward a better Hawaii.

I am also writing in strong support of the confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot, as Director of the Department Human Services, as a dear friend, one of his "ohana". He has always given way more of his time and support when asked and has genuine concern and love for everyone around him. He is always giving and expecting nothing in return. He is a true ambassador of the Aloha Spirit which makes Hawaii unique and beautiful.

Hawaii needs Pankaj's leadership and vision to lift our most vulnerable residents and to inspire everyone to practice Aloha. For the next 4 years and forever more. Thank you for allowing me to share my support of Mr. Pankaj Bhanot.

# TESTIMONY OF KATHY OCHIKUBO IN SUPPORT OF THE NOMINATION OF PANKAJ BHANOT AS DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

March 8, 2019

Dear Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services:

My name is Kathy Ochikubo and I am testifying as an individual in strong support of the confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

I am a recent retiree from the State of Hawaii, DHS. In my 30 years of working for the Department, I observed a handful of Directors come and go, but none that had made any real impact like Mr. Bhanot had on my work, the Department and in my personal life.

I worked under Mr. Bhanot from 2004 when he was the Employment and Child Care Program Administrator for the Department's Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD). Under his guidance, I learned the importance of team building and expectations of a strong work ethic and quality management.

I watched Mr. Bhanot be promoted to the BESSD Administrator, the largest Division in the DHS, the Deputy Director of DHS and then the Director of DHS in 2017. I remember attending award ceremonies most notably where Mr. Bhanot was awarded the *Department of Human Services 2006 Employee of the Year*, *Sustained Superior Performance Award*, *2006 Governor's Award for Distinguished State Service*, *Commendation-2013 State of Hawaii' Manager of the Year*, *For Strong Leadership in Rebuilding the Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division and Business Process Reengineering Effort*, *2013 Certificate of Recognition - State of Hawaii' Manager of the Year*, *For Exemplary and Outstanding Performance in Serving the Citizens of Hawai'i*, *Certificate of Merit - 2013 Manager of the Year, Department of Human Services*, *For Outstanding Contribution Toward the Improvement of Government Service*.

What impresses me more, is Mr. Bhanot's personal qualities. He remains the same friendly, approachable, funny, caring person, never forgetting where he came from and the colleagues and friends he has made along the way. I am one of many of those fortunate friends. He always had an open door policy and provided advice at times and helped my daughter along the way to get her first job out of college. He is a proponent of family values and work-life balance. He loves his family and travelling with his wife and son. Whatever he does, he does with gusto, passion, conviction, perseverance and always with humor, which I feel is his most endearing quality.

Mr. Bhanot's leadership approach and personal qualities has inspired the Department to move forward with new and innovative systems to improve the lives of families in need. Mr. Bhanot feels compelled to complete unfinished business that he has initiated as the DHS Director and therefore, I feel that it would be a disservice to the people of Hawaii should he not be confirmed, again, to serve as the DHS Director.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on GM 605.



TESTIMONY OF KIMBERLY MIYAZAWA FRANK  
IN SUPPORT OF THE NOMINATION OF PANKAJ BHANOT, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE FOR  
DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, STATE OF HAWAII (GM 605)

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TO: The Honorable Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair, Committee on Human Services  
The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair, Committee on Human Services  
Members of the Committee on Human Services

FOR: GM 605 Submitting for consideration and confirmation of Gubernatorial Nominee  
Pankaj Bhanot for Director of Department of Human Services, State of Hawaii, for a  
term to expire on 12-05-2022

DATE: March 8, 2019

TIME: 2:45 pm

COMMITTEE: Committee on Human Services

ROOM: Conference Room 016, State Capitol

FROM: Kimberly Miyazawa Frank  
Former Director of Community Development, DHS State of Hawaii

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Aloha, Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and members of the Committee:

I provide this testimony in my individual capacity and write to express my strong support for the nomination of Pankaj Bhanot for Director of the Department of Human Services.

I had the honor of serving on Director Bhanot's team from September of 2016 through September of 2018, where I was charged with operationalizing his vision for 'Ohana Nui in the state of Hawaii.

Translated from Hawaiian as "extended family," 'Ohana Nui is an anti-poverty strategy that seeks to create an intergenerational cycle of opportunity for families by concurrently supporting all family members' needs in the areas of housing, food, education, employment, wellness, and social capital. This strategy of whole-family support is a best practice being implemented with much success across the country. And, Hawaii is often cited as a national leader of this approach because of Director Bhanot's leadership.

In early 2016, Director Bhanot began demonstrating the potential of 'Ohana Nui and inspired the Human Services Department team members and its government, non-profit, community, and business sector partners to embrace and implement 'Ohana Nui. He cited the Department's

statutory obligation to provide the people of Hawaii with these fundamental supports, and outlined the business case for operationalizing 'Ohana Nui, namely better outcomes for whole families while improving the efficiency and effectiveness of government, potentially bending downward the cost curve of human services.

While this clearly and aptly demonstrated the value proposition of 'Ohana Nui, what was most compelling was Director Bhanot's embodiment of servant leadership principles and the Aloha Spirit in carrying out his role.

In his twenty years of service to the Department, and most recently as its leader, Director Bhanot consistently and unabashedly cites his commitment to the people of Hawaii – borne out of a promise he made at the young age of fourteen to his grandmother in India, coupled with the State Constitution's Aloha Spirit Statute, Section 5 – 7.5. This is his “north star.”

As the former Administrator of the Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD), and now as the Director of the Department of Human Services, Director Bhanot has had to make and will continue to be called upon to make tough calls, what we might construe as impossible decisions. Each of these decisions carry significant consequences, often to multiple stakeholders (i.e., a child, a parent, a family, the people of Hawaii, the Department, our community partners, leaders in the Executive Branch of our government, and our Governor). It is not hyperbole to say that these are often calls that can result in “life or death.”

Thus, this Committee and the people of Hawaii should feel confident and take a great deal of comfort in knowing that Pankaj Bhanot has and will continue to direct the Department of Human Services and make every decision with the principles of servant leadership and the Aloha Spirit at the forefront. I know that I do.

I am honored to provide this testimony on his behalf and humbly request the Committee approve his confirmation.

Thank you.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BY  
RODERICK K. BECKER

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 605

Friday, March 8, 2019  
2:45 p.m.  
Room 016

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, PANKAJ BHANOT, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE AT NOON ON 12-05-22.

Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support the appointment of Pankaj Bhanot to the position of director of the Department of Human Services (department).

I have known Pankaj for many years and have worked closely with him in various capacities and through many situations. As Pankaj has served the State as an administrator, deputy director, and most recently director of the department, I had the opportunity to work with him as legislative staff, and in leadership roles with the Departments of Budget and Finance and Accounting and General Services. I have found Pankaj to be highly capable, collaborative, and someone that always acts with integrity.

Pankaj also has the heart to lead the department and truly cares for many people that receive the services it provides. He has always been an effective advocate for those that need government assistance and has done much to improve the lives of many. At the same time, Pankaj understands the ever changing economic and fiscal climate and is always able to make appropriate adjustments as necessary.

Pankaj has demonstrated his ability and desire to improve the condition and lives of our most vulnerable residents many times over. Therefore, I highly recommend he be confirmed and permitted to continue serving in the capacity of director of the Department of Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



WRITTEN TESTIMONY BY  
ROBERT YU

TO THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 605

**Friday, March 8, 2019**  
**2:45 p.m.**  
**Room 016**

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, PANKAJ BHANOT, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE AT NOON ON 12-05-2022.

Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support Pankaj Bhanot's appointment to the position of director of the Department of Human Services (DHS). I am working with Mr. Bhanot in my professional capacity as Deputy Director of Finance.

Governor Ige's administration is committed to addressing the many issues facing our state in a direct and forthright manner. We strive to do the right thing, the right way to achieve our shared goal of a healthy, sustainable economy to support our keiki, our kupuna, and the disadvantaged.

Mr. Bhanot is an integral part of a team that is committed to achieving the goals of this administration in an honest, transparent, accountable, and responsive manner.

Mr. Bhanot has been in various positions at DHS for almost 20 years which includes program specialist, division administrator, deputy director and he currently serves as the director since September 2016. His extensive work experience at DHS will benefit the department and the State; therefore, we support confirmation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

March 7, 2019

Re: GM 605 confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services,  
Gubernatorial Nominee, Pankaj Bhanot

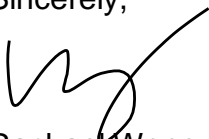
Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee on Human  
Services:

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of the confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Service (DHS). There are few people in the state who understand what is required to lead this department, its team, and its programs from a strengths-based perspective and for the larger community. Pankaj is one of them, and I can attest that there has never been a DHS director who has more subject matter expertise and experience than him. He came up through the ranks, intentionally learned about programs and policies across divisions, seeks out best practice training, nurtures local and national relationships, and excels at implementing collaborative, comprehensive initiatives that improve systems, outcomes, and efficiencies.

Pankaj is principled, courageous, and respects others, regardless of social station. These values are part of who he is—personally and professionally—and this is exactly the type of leader that our state needs to stand up for and alongside Hawai'i residents who are not always heard. We live during a time when some highlight differences and push for ugly divisions. In Hawai'i, however, we are all interconnected in our island state, celebrate our diversity as a strength, and have a long history of inclusion and respect. It is vital that we have a strong leader, like Pankaj, at the helm of DHS, which is responsible for a quarter of Hawai'i residents and nearly half of our children. He provides a voice on the state and national levels for all of us.

One Shared Future is an organization that I founded for our interconnected community: we collectively imagine a positive future for Hawai'i and bring people together across sectors to create that future by creating safe spaces and providing professional development experiences. It is in this spirit that I urge to you confirm Pankaj Bhanot as DHS director so that he has the opportunity to continue working with others to lead Hawai'i to a thriving future.

Sincerely,



Rachael Wong, DrPH  
Founder & Strategic Advisor

FROM: Lila King  
TO: Senate Committee on Human Services  
DATE: March 8, 2018  
RE: GM 605  
Consideration and Confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as Director,  
Department of Human Services

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CHAIR RUDERMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the following comments reflecting my **strong support** of the confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services (“DHS”). Mr. Bhanot has and continues to bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to DHS from his many years of service within the Department. He works tirelessly for DHS, but also for the larger community, including the numerous service providers and other state agencies, to build effective collaborations to better serve the families of Hawaii.

I have had the privilege of working with Mr. Bhanot as a Deputy Attorney General assigned to DHS and recently as the DHS Special Assistant to the Director. During the time spanning our relationship, he has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment and compassion to the DHS mission of supporting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Hawaii.

Working in the DHS Director’s Office, I observed how he resolved wide-ranging critical issues, ranging from high level strategizing to ensure the progress of the DHS IT modernization project to personally comforting a grieving mother during her time of loss. I also witnessed Director Bhanot turn many potentially contentious personnel matters into positive opportunities for staff professional growth. It was overwhelming at times. However, he was always able to find a solution to the complicated problems to make a positive impact. When asked how he does it, he consistently instructed that *we must do what is right for the families we serve and the staff we employ*. I’ve recently left DHS to work at another department that provides services for many of the same DHS families. Although I no longer work with him on a day-to-day basis, I take with me the many lessons learned and strive to carry forward his value of doing the right thing for the families we serve and the people I work with.

Not only does Mr. Bhanot possess an unwavering professionalism, he is genuinely a kind and compassionate person who cares about the well-being of everyone he interacts with. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm Mr. Bhanot as Director of the Department of Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

To: Senator Russell Ruderman, Chair  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Cathy Betts

Testimony in Support, GM 605

Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of GM 605. I submit this testimony in my personal capacity.

As way of historical background, I have worked with Pankaj in many different capacities over the last 8 years I have been with the Department of Human Services. For seven years, I served as the Executive Director of the Commission on the Status of Women, an attached agency to DHS. During that time, I worked closely with Pankaj and developed a close kinship and friendship with him. As a first generation U.S. citizen with an immigrant mother, I understood the many challenges and triumphs that immigrants experience when they come to the U.S. and I saw eye to eye with Pankaj in our shared pursuit of justice, alleviating racism, sexism, and poverty, and uplifting our most marginalized communities.

In Pankaj, I found a supporter and mentor who understood why critical race theory and feminism had a place in state government; understanding that the most harmed in our society are women of color and children. With this shared understanding, he supported my efforts to broaden legal protections for breastfeeding mothers in the workplace; he supported me when I advocated for increased protections for domestic violence and sexual assault victims in the workplace; and he supported me when I made the case that paid family leave, paid sick leave, and an increase in the minimum wage have the ability to uplift our most vulnerable workers out of poverty and into economic self-sufficiency.

Pankaj is creative, understands when and how to take risks, and is hard working. But most importantly, he has a deep sense of empathy and knows how to uplift his employees. He has an open door policy, and the people within DHS know this.

Throughout the last 8 years, Pankaj has revealed himself to be a visionary with deeply held beliefs regarding social justice and equality, as well as a formidable leader and mentor. His north star, his vision, is to end intergenerational poverty and discrimination. He knows these are intricately woven social ills and that these issues that plague our communities have solutions. One only need find the solutions and have the courage to act on them. To have a leader like Pankaj in state government is inspiring. He is not a bureaucrat. He's an advocate who is an expert in executing change. I sincerely believe that if anyone could accomplish this for the State of Hawaii, it would be Pankaj Bhanot.

Please accept my strong support for his confirmation.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

**LATE**

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/7/2019 3:53:44 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Michael Moser | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

Support for GM605 confirmation as the Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, PANKAJ BHANOT

I wholeheartedly support Director Pankaj Bhanot in his bid for confirmation as Director of the Department of Human Services. Through personal experience and witness I affirm Director Bhanot's passion for Hawaii's impoverished community, his commitment to improving their lives, and effective leadership in his role. Director Bhanot's determination to improve social mobility for Hawaii's SNAP recipients, yet realizing the need to be resourceful, lead him to envision an innovative interagency partnership with the Community Colleges. Director Bhanot reformed DHS's SNAP Employment and Training program by prioritizing college degrees and certificates as an effective pathway out of poverty for SNAP recipients. The program leveraging resources from the DHS SNAP office and the Community Colleges is now known as HINET, Hawaii Nutrition Employment and Training ([hinethawaii.org](http://hinethawaii.org).) HINET has resulted in increased client count in the SNAP E&T program, increased enrollment in college workforce and certificate programs and improved college retention and completion rates for the State. DHS SNAP clients, now college students, are often the first generation in their family to pursue a college degree with a true desire for self sufficiency through employment. These significant results are the result of leadership, vision, and willingness to adjust internal policies in collaboration with the University of Hawaii. This is a true model of significant reform, innovation, and transformation via a genuine interagency partnership. A recent news feature provides impactful student / client testimonials <https://www.hawaii.edu/news/2019/02/10/hinet-helps-hungry-students-succeed/> Moreover, Director Bhanot's accomplishments with this innovative program is now gaining national attention as a best practice for social and economic mobility.

Thank you in advance for reconfirming Director Bhanot's appointment and recognition of his accomplishments and future successes on behalf of Hawaii.

**LATE**

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/7/2019 6:39:30 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By     | Organization | Testifier<br>Position | Present at<br>Hearing |
|------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Edward Mersereau | Individual   | Support               | No                    |

Comments:

Strong Support

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/7/2019 7:03:24 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

**LATE**

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Lori Wada    | Individual   | Support            | Yes                |

Comments:

Lori H. Wada, Esq.

Kailua, Hawaii 96734

Re: GM 605 Confirmation hearing regarding Pankaj Bhanot for Director of Human Services

Dear Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in **strong support** on behalf of Pankaj Bhanot for the position of Director of the State of Hawaii Department of Human Services (DHS).

I have known and worked with Mr. Bhanot since March of 2011 until the present. Mr. Bhanot is presently employed as the Director of the State of Hawaii Department of Human Services, a position he has held for the past two years. Mr. Bhanot's experience in administration at DHD also includes being Deputy Director under two prior Directors. As Director, Mr. Bhanot has made numerous positive changes in the Department and has begun work to implement initiatives promoting his vision and mission statement upon becoming Director in 2016. These initiatives include ensuring the Department is team-oriented in getting tasks completed, human-centered when tackling improvements with a focus on the client's perspective and carrying out decisions that are evidence based as fairness and respect are of utmost importance to him. Mr. Bhanot continues to be a pillar of industriousness and energy in his zeal to produce efficient outcomes for the good of the people of Hawaii. What is most impressive is Mr. Bhanot's humble and kind nature balanced with the fair and firm ability in often difficult decision-making.

Mr. Bhanot has maintained the highest level of professional decorum and courtesy and continues to be a selfless and dedicated worker in the best interests of the State. I have no doubt that upon confirmation for the position of Director of the State of Hawaii's Department of Human Services, there will continue to be great changes for future successes for the State of Hawaii. I strongly support, fully endorse and without



reservation, submit my recommendation of Mr. Pankaj Bhanot for the position of Director of the Department of Human Services and humbly request that he be confirmed by the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in this matter.

**LATE**

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/7/2019 8:27:51 PM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Keopu Reelitz | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

I support Pankaj Bhanot's appointment as Department of Human Services Director. Pankaj brings with him two decades of experience with the department and a passion for serving others. Please vote to confirm him in this important state leadership role.

Written Statement of  
**Zubin Menon**

**LATE**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

Friday, March 8, 2019 2:45 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

**IN SUPPORT OF:**

**G.M. 605** Confirmation to the Director of the Department of Human Services, Gubernatorial Nominee, PANKAJ BHANOT

To: Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee on Human Services  
Re: **Testimony in Support of G.M. 605**

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the following comments reflecting my strong support of the confirmation of Pankaj Bhanot as the Director of the Department of Human Services (“DHS” or “the Department”).

Pankaj Bhanot has the experience, vision, and dedication to lead DHS. He has served as the Director of DHS since September 2016, as the Deputy Director for over two-and-a-half years combined, and as a Division Administrator for the Benefit Employment and Support Services Division (“BESSD”), the largest division in the Department with over 700 employees and 200 contractors providing direct and indirect services to Hawai’i residents.

Mr. Bhanot is a visionary with a passion for human services and a track record of success. Among his many achievements, he is leading the effort to implement ‘Ohana Nui - a new and comprehensive service delivery model that invests in children and families early and concurrently to improve outcomes for residents. This is a program that we need now more than ever, given the challenges Hawai’i faces as a state - hunger, substance addiction, mental health issues and homelessness, among others.

Pankaj Bhanot’s confirmation will not only ensure that the Department continues to provide timely, efficient and effective programs, services and benefits to Hawai’i residents, but will reinstate a leader to the Department who is forward thinking, innovative, has a track record of successful delivery for our State, and who is passionately committed to our community. **I ask that you support Pankaj Bhanot’s confirmation to Director of the Department of Human Services.**

Mahalo nui.

Zubin Menon  
zmenon@gmail.com

**LATE**

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/8/2019 6:58:44 AM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Blake Shaw   | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

To Whom it May Concern:

I've known Director Bhanot and watched him execute his role as leader in the Hawaii Department of Human Services since approximately 2012. When I first met him, he was the Director at BESSD. They were under immense pressure with the recent loss of positions and a looming lawsuit for poor timeliness. Director Bhanot led his Division from one of the poorest performing public assistance agencies to one of the best in the country. It became clear to me that he wasn't driven by just being the best. He was driven by the desire to create a better working environment for his staff, as well as by the need of the vulnerable citizens in Hawaii who were sometimes not receiving their supportive services for months. As Director of DHS, his mission always seems clear - to ensure the best service possible to Hawaiians in need of support - to encourage self-sufficiency and support the well-being.

Director Bhanot is not only an excellent leader. He is a wonderful person. Thank You.

Respectfully,

Blake Shaw

**LATE**

**GM-605**

Submitted on: 3/8/2019 11:55:07 AM

Testimony for HMS on 3/8/2019 2:45:00 PM

| Submitted By       | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Catherine Scardino | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

Mr. And Mrs. Joseph and Catherine Scardino **support** the reappointment of Mr. Pankaj Bhanot as the Department of Human Services Director.

**LATE**

Bernadette K. Tebia, MSN, MPH

87-1041 Papaya Road

Waianae, HI 96792

March 8, 2019

**To: Testimony to Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services**

**Date and Location:** March 8, 2019 at 2:45pm, Room 016

**RE: GM 605, Pankaj Bhanot** as the Director of the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

My name is Bernadette Tebia, and I'm currently working as a Registered Nurse in Hospice and a Licensed Massage Therapist. It is my honor to **SUPPORT** the nomination Pankaj Bhanot for Director of the Department of Human Service. I have known Mr. Bhanot for the past 2 years. I can testify that Mr. Bhanot epitomizes stalwart professionalism and character. He will hold this office with the highest degree of honor, integrity, and compassion for all, and especially the underserved. His vast experience and knowledge in field of health and human service will serve the people of Hawaii immensely. Please confirm Mr. Bhanot.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of GM 605 and Mr. Pankaj Bhanot.

Sincerely,

Bernadette K. Tebia